



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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January 2024

It is our mission to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Murrieta Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.

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Murrieta Valley Historical Society

Email:
info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

Phone: (951) 677-7758



Jack, Rhina, Grant, and Winifred Hamilton
(Courtesy of Diane Opsahl)

The Hamilton Family

By Jeffery G. Harmon

The Hamilton House is located at 24854 Washington Avenue and it was built in 1925 by Jack Hamilton. The Dutch Colonial architecture makes the home a unique landmark in the Historic Downtown Murrieta District. It stands today as a testament to the contributions of the Hamilton family to the Murrieta Community.

John Jack Hamilton was born February 10, 1889 in Cobden,

Union County, Illinois. He was the son of Josiah and Lucinda (Guthrie) Hamilton. Jack moved to California in his early twenties looking for work and new opportunities. On March 5, 1913, he married Rhina Rosa Kirchhofer in Orange County, California.

Rhina was born March 24, 1890 in Chicago, Illinois. She was the daughter of German immigrants Reichardt and Marie



The Hamilton family in front of their house in 1933. From left to right: Grant, Jack, Rhina, Winifred, Jack's sister, Edith Beale, and Jack's father, Josiah Hamilton. Note: Child in center could be Mary Joe Beale. (Courtesy of Diane Opsahl)

(Swartz) Kirchhofer. Her mother later married Mr. Healy.

Jack and Rhina first settled in Los Angeles. They had two children, Winifred (1914) and Grant (1916). Then the Hamilton family moved to Murrieta, California around 1917. Jack had been hired to work as a carpenter for Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs Resort. He also did construction work around Murrieta when he wasn't working at the resort. Around 1917, he built a large barn for a farmer near the corner of Adams Ave and Ivy Street. The barn was later a part of the former Howard Sykes ranch.

Mrs. Marie Healy, Rhina's mother, bought some land in Murrieta known as Section 3. The land was located

between Clinton Keith and Los Alamos Road and east of Interstate 215. When the home was built on the property, an elevator was installed. It was a first for a Murrieta residential home.

Jack owned some acreage below the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort where he grew alfalfa. It was known as the Lower Ranch. Around 1935, he built a home on this property. It was located near the Stuhlman Hot Springs Resort, which opened in 1936.

Sometime during the 1920s, Jack was hired to build the beautiful portico for the former Lakeman Lunch Room. It is possible he built the portico for Henry Eiler when the business changed hands in 1925. Today the property is known as

Ray's Murrieta Café.

In 1923, Jack built a metal rectangle building on the corner of Washington Avenue and C Street. The shop became his base of operations as he continued to be hired out for local construction projects. During that same year he constructed the McPherson cottage located at 24790 2nd Avenue. Mrs. Julia McPherson's home was completed in January 1924.

Jack built his family home in front of his workshop in 1925. It was two stories, with a furnace in the basement. Meanwhile, he continued to work at the resort.

In the 1930s, Jack was the construction supervisor for the resort. In 1931, he and his crew tore down the indoor plunge and constructed the beautiful outdoor pool and changing rooms. Then in 1933, he supervised the reconstruction and expansion of the auditorium.

Jack and Rhina were also active in local civic and social groups. They often hosted the Murrieta Bridge Club at their home. They also hosted the Frolicker's Club, a local high school club that Grant was a member of. Jack was also a member of the Elsinore Masonic Lodge and the Imperial Highway Association.

Postmistress Rose Tarwater petitioned the U.S. Postal officials requesting a permanent post office building for Murrieta in 1940. Jack Hamilton leased the northwest corner lot on



The Lower Ranch (Courtesy of Diane Opsahl)

Washington Avenue and C Street across the street from his house for the post office. He then built the new post office building for Murrieta. The building served the community for forty-five years. Then in 1985, a larger post office was built further south on Washington Avenue and the "Hamilton" post office went into private use.

Grant Hamilton was a member of the local Boy Scout troop. He attended the Murrieta Grammar School and then graduated from Elsinore High School in 1935. Afterwards, he moved to Los Angeles to work at the Beckwith Elevator Company with his uncle, Earnest Lincoln. Grant married Adelyn Anderson in Fallbrook on June 15, 1940. They then settled in Los Angeles where Grant's father built them a new home. Grant and Adelyn had two children, Diane, and Linda.

Jack left the resort and

found work in San Diego in 1941. He commuted to work until he and Rhina moved to San Diego in 1942. They would return to their Murrieta home on the weekends to check on their property interests and to visit with family and friends.

Later Jack was employed at Camp Pendleton as the supervisor of plumbing and sewage disposal in 1945. On June 12, 1945, Jack was riding his tractor at the Lower Ranch when he had a heart attack and died. Grant was in the Navy at that time and had to take a leave of absence to attend his father's funeral.

Winifred had graduated from Elsinore High School in 1932 and then attended UCLA. In 1938, she married Edgar W. Tubbs in Los Angeles. They had two children, Edwin (1940), and Allen (1944). After Jack's death, Winifred returned to her childhood home.

Rhina Hamilton died in 1981 and was buried next to Jack in the Elsinore Valley Cemetery. She had requested a joint headstone to replace Jack's. His original headstone was then brought back to the house and placed in the flower bed next to the front entrance. When the grandkids would visit, they always believed that grandpa was buried on the property, but he wasn't.

In 2007, Allen Tubbs sold the Hamilton House and the Murrieta post office building. Today the Hamilton House is perfectly preserved by the current owners. The yard has been beautifully landscaped and enclosed by an ornate rod iron fence. The house stands as a reminder of the Hamilton family and to Jack Hamilton, a carpenter who built many structures in the area that remain standing today.



Grant Hamilton while serving in the Navy.
(Courtesy of Diane Opsahl)



The Hamilton House (Photo taken April 23, 2016 by author)



Jack Hamilton was the construction supervisor for the outdoor pool and changing rooms at Guenther's Murrieta Hot Springs Resort (Source: Postcard internet image)

Museum Update

Greetings,

The Murrieta Museum has been busy with several 3rd grade class tours. It is always a great opportunity to share our local history with the students.

We will be adding more locations to the Historic Downtown Sticker project. We have five ready to install and more to come as funding becomes available.

We would like to thank all those who came out to the Christmas Open House at the Museum. It was great seeing everyone including Mayor Lori Stone and Council Member Ron

Holliday.

We would like to thank all the Murrieta Valley Historical Society's volunteers who have helped throughout the year. We could not do this without all of you.

We have had multiple requests to offer historic walking tours in the downtown area. We will be offering a scheduled walking tour once a month. Please visit our website or Facebook page to learn when the tours will be offered. If you have a group and would like to schedule a private walking tour, please contact us.

If you would like more information, please visit our website: murrietahistory.org or call 951-677-7758.

We would like to wish everyone a Safe and Healthy New Year!

Thank you,

Annette Jennings,

Murrieta Museum Director

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Murrieta Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 1341
Murrieta, CA 92564

Phone: 951-677-7758
E-mail: info@murrietahistoricalsociety.org

**Next General
Board Meeting**
on
January 8th at 5:30 p.m.
Please join us at
the Murrieta Museum



The Murrieta Museum,
41810 Juniper Street
at Hunt Memorial Park.

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